

## **Jaelyn Delshaun Young, 20 and Muhammad Dakhalla , 22**

On August 8, 2015, newlyweds Jaelyn Young and Muhammad Dakhalla were arrested by the FBI at the Golden triangle Regional Airport while attempting to travel to Syria under the guise of a honeymoon.

### **Jaelyn Before Radicalization:**

- Jaelyn grew up in a Christian home in Mississippi and regularly attended church.
- Jaelyn was a cheerleader, National Honor Society member, “robotics nerd,” and “friends with everyone” in high school.
- Jaelyn had very strict parents: early curfews, constant phone calls & not allowing her to offer rides to other kids. In addition, her father, a Vicksburg Police officer who served in the Navy, was often not around.
- Jaelyn suffered from self-harm in high school and was bullied by other girls, according to her sister. While Jaelyn was “popular”, she had few real friends, and her best friend died from a lung infection during her senior year. This caused Jaelyn to go into a major depression.

### **Muhammad Before Radicalization:**

- Muhammad graduated high school with a 4.0 GPA and went on to study computer engineering and psychology in college.
- He was known for being very helpful around the house with his parents.

### **As a couple:**

- Friends say Jaelyn was manipulative and controlling, for example, making Muhammad ask for Jaelyn’s permission to go out with friends and getting angry when he stayed out late.
- In groups, the two were often isolated as a couple, keeping to themselves more and more and limiting interaction with friends.
- Jaelyn converted to Islam after they began dating, although friends say she had explored conversion before they began seeing one another.
- As Muhammad and Jaelyn fought more, Muhammad became depressed, so friends were surprised when the couple got married quickly in an Islamic ceremony, notifying them the day of the wedding and announcing a potluck dinner reception.

### **The radicalization of Jaelyn and Muhammad:**

- Sometime during the spring of 2015, Jaelyn started watching videos by a violent extremist and became fascinated with ISIS.
- After converting to Islam, Jaelyn began post articles on social media about the obligation of Muslims to join ISIS.
- Muhammad later started watching videos with Jaelyn and downloaded ISIS’s guide to making the trip to the Caliphate.

- Both Muhammad and Jane avoided calls from friends & family and abandoned former interests during the months leading up to their attempted trip to Syria, using their honeymoon as a cover story.
- Jaelyn and Muhammad were arrested by the FBI at the Golden Triangle Regional Airport. Relatives stated they were “absolutely stunned” and said that “It’s like having a two-by-four right between the eyes.”
- Jaelyn was sentenced to 12 years in prison; Muhammad was sentenced to 8 years.

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***Muhammad has since regretted his decision to try joining ISIS. In a statement made to the sentencing judge he stated, “I was completely wrong about what ISIS was. I’ve come to the conclusion that they’re really sick and twisted. They twist Islam for their own agenda. I denounce them. I condemn them.” He has also thanked the FBI for saving his life.***

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